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Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences

Note by the Secretariat

In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences outlines her vision in the exercise of the mandate entrusted to her by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1994/45, which established the mandate, and Human Rights Council resolutions 7/24, 14/2, 16/7, 17/11, 20/12 and 23/25 and the working methods she intends to use, building on the work of the previous mandate holders.

The Special Rapporteur provides an account of her activities since her appointment, then examines the general context and main trends and challenges posed by violence against women. She notes that there is a lack of full acceptance and incorporation of the international norms and regional human rights standards on violence against women, and believes that specific measures are needed to address this normative challenge and the implementation gap. The Special Rapporteur intends to examine the legal and policy frameworks of her mandate and international human rights mechanisms, focusing on the gap between incorporating and implementing international and regional standards relating to violence against women, the updating of general recommendation No. 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the implementation framework of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. She will further focus on the links between violence against women before conflict, conflict and post-conflict situations and reparations for such violence, and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda, among others. She is interested in strengthening her collaboration with international and regional human rights mechanisms and in joint work on actions necessary to improve the acceptance, incorporation, implementation and updating of the current framework in order to accelerate the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

The Special Rapporteur subsequently sets out the thematic priorities of her intended action. In particular, her focus will be on the use of data on violence against women as a tool for its prevention. She calls for the establishment of a "femicide watch" or "gender-related killings of women watch" – and believes that this model could be extended to other

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forms of violence against women, such as rape, sexual violence, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. She plans to focus on protection and services for women survivors of violence, in particular shelters and protection orders, and a code of conduct for law enforcement agents and security sector personnel dealing with violence against women, which could possibly be e extended to other service providers, such as social workers and health providers. She also proposes to examine the connections between fundamentalism and extremism and violence against women, and ways to improve the security and safety of women and girls in the context of forced displacement and refugee flows. She further proposes to look into online violence against women and adolescent girls as a new form of gender-based violence. Focus will also be placed on prevention of the root causes of violence against women, such as persistent discriminatory gender stereotypes, discriminatory family and penal law provisions, and on education at all levels of formal education (primary, secondary and tertiary), including education of legal professionals.

The Special Rapporteur concludes the report by describing the working methods she intends to follow in carrying out her mandate, which include country visits and reports thereon, with recommendations and follow-up action, the sending of communications through the communications procedure, and the development of thematic expertise. Lastly, the Special Rapporteur will strengthen the engagement of the mandate with other United Nations human rights intergovernmental bodies that address violence against women. She intends to focus on cooperation and synergies between her mandate, that of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and of other treaty bodies, and to work closely with other special procedure mandate holders. She also intends to fight violence against women in cooperation with regional and national mechanisms.

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I. Introduction

1. In the present report, submitted to the Human Rights Council pursuant to its resolution 23/25, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences outlines her activities and sets out her vision of the mandate, and the methods of work she intends to use throughout it.

2. The Special Rapporteur is grateful to the previous mandate holders for the enormous amount of work carried out in the 22 years of the existence of the mandate, which has become a visible and credible tool for providing key recommendations to States, the ultimate bearers of the responsibility to protect women and girls from violence and gender-based discrimination, but also to civil society actors, other stakeholders and the international community. At the same time, however, the legal and policy landscape around the mandate has changed owing to developments in international and regional frameworks and mechanisms on violence against women that direct the mandate, reshaping its role and its focus on prevention, implementation challenges and collaboration with all other relevant global and regional mechanisms in order to accelerate the elimination of violence against women, its causes and consequences.

II. Activities of the Special Rapporteur

A. Reporting

3. On 12 October 2015, the Special Rapporteur addressed the General Assembly, at its seventieth session, for the first time in her official capacity as Special Rapporteur. She informed the Assembly that she would continue the work initiated by previous mandate holders in building partnerships and synergies with all stakeholders in the fight against violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, on the basis of a comprehensive and universal approach to its elimination. She highlighted the huge implementation gap, and pointed out that, at this time, the main task is to close that gap and to accelerate the full incorporation and implementation of international, regional and national instruments, policy documents and recommendations to combat and prevent violence against women, and to protect victims through the provisions of adequate support services at the national level, including reparations and prosecution of perpetrators. She also mentioned some of the priorities of the mandate that will be developed below. She noted the last reports of the previous mandate holder (A/70/209 and A/HRC/29/27) and invited all interested stakeholders to send their views and proposals on any actions needed to improve the current framework and implementation gaps to her.

4. On 13 October 2015, on the margins of the General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur participated in an event organized by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland, where she explained her vision on the role of men and boys in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality, and highlighted that the principle of gender equality was essential for the full enjoyment of civil, political, social, economic and development rights by both women and girls, on an equal footing with men and boys. On 14 October 2015, she took part in an event on the theme, "Bridging the agendas: women, peace and security and preventing violent extremism", during the launch of the global study

on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000),[1] in which she participated. On 16 October 2015, she took part in a panel discussion on practical measures to put an end to femicide.[2]

5. On 14 March 2016, the mandate holder, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 7/24, presented an oral report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixtieth session. At the opening of the session, the Special Rapporteur outlined the priorities of the mandate. At the invitation of the Commission, the Special Rapporteur made concluding remarks at the end of the examination of the review theme on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, which was for the first time based on interactive voluntary reporting and the sharing of different experiences and good practices. In her concluding remarks, the Special Rapporteur highlighted that violence against women and girls was increasing, and in new and emerging forms, facilitated by the Internet and other communications technology; the importance of international and regional normative frameworks for developing national laws and policies, and some of the common challenges for the implementation of these frameworks, such as sustaining political will and adequate funding; and the fact that impunity and accountability of perpetrators remained a challenge. She explained the importance of relying on the collection of comparable data on the nature and extent of such violence, and recalled that challenges remained in the collection of such data. She added that data on homicide should include intimate partner femicide, and pointed out the importance of data on all other types of femicide, which could be analysed and used in designing preventive approaches. There was also a need to strengthen efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and international and regional instruments, national laws and policies in a comprehensive and holistic manner to ensure that each and every woman and girl lived free from violence.

6. At the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Special Rapporteur also participated in a number of events, including jointly with the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on a wide range of issues, such as on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5; an open forum on the theme, "Tackling violence against women as a prerequisite for sustainable development"; a side event on the theme "Sustainable Development Goal 5 and online violence against women: who's accountable? Due diligence, the States and Internet intermediaries"; an event organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on the theme, "Empowering adolescent girls and young women through education: a new model for delivering the 2030 Agenda"; and a panel discussion organized by the Women's Learning Partnership in collaboration with the Gender Studies programme at The New School on the theme, "When home is where the harm is: family law reform to challenge gender-based violence".

B. Participation in conferences and consultations

7. On 28 August 2015, in Tokyo, the Special Rapporteur took part in a round table on "Women and peacebuilding", on the margins of the 2015 World Assembly for Women Conference. At the event, she delivered a statement on the relationship between violence

[1] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325*, October 2015.

[2] See General Assembly resolution 70/176 and E/CN.15/2015/16.

against women and peacebuilding, explaining that general recommendation No. 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was aimed at integrating a human rights framework for women into the women, peace and security agenda. On 29 August, at a special expert meeting organized by Equal Futures Partnership at the Conference, she made a statement on the potential of equal futures partnerships, pointing out that gender-based violence was considered a form of discrimination that prevents women from enjoying their civil, political, economic and development rights.

8. On 24 September 2015, in New York, the mandate holder, at the invitation of New York University, participated in the launch of the Global Gender Studies concentration, where she made a statement on uncovering the gendered dynamics in global affairs, and peace, development and human rights beyond 2015. She stressed that, to observe such dynamics, it was essential to bring gender into discussions on international relations, to use a "gender lens" and to take into consideration the causes and consequences of persistent forms of direct and indirect discrimination, inequality, violence against women, subordination and oppression of women and girls around the world.

9. On 20 October 2015, in Sarajevo, the Special Rapporteur participated in a conference on the theme, "Monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention: new synergies", in the context of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. She delivered a statement on the new synergies among the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Istanbul Convention, and called upon all States that had not yet ratified the Istanbul Convention to re-examine their reasons for not doing so and to consider accelerating the ratification process.

10. On 2 November 2015, in The Hague, the Netherlands, the Special Rapporteur participated in the annual conference of Women against Violence Europe. She subsequently participated in the third World Conference of Women's Shelters, at which she delivered a statement on strengthening global and regional networks, stressing the need for clear and comprehensive national legislation and policies on violence against women, including on shelters and global guidelines on shelters.

11. On 9 and 10 November 2015, in Tbilisi, she took part in a high-level conference on achieving gender equality, and challenges to and opportunities in the European Neighbourhood Policy. She delivered a statement on joining forces to end violence against women and girls in public and private domains, where progress in achieving gender equality and eliminating such violence would accelerate significantly under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly given that, for the first time, a global gendered framework for development called for the realization of human rights of all. During the conference, she interacted with a number of stakeholders from the Government and civil society entities.

12. On 13 November 2015, in Geneva, the Special Rapporteur met with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to discuss cooperation between their mandates, including in relation to the work in progress to update its general recommendation No. 19. The mandate holder hopes to hold regular meetings with the Committee, and also emphasizes the importance for both mechanisms of adopting consistent recommendations and following up on their implementation. In the light of resolution 1994/45, in which the Commission on Human Rights founded the mandate, the Special Rapporteur wishes to continue to cooperate with the Committee.

13. On 18 November 2015, the Special Rapporteur had a meeting with the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence to discuss

future cooperation with it and the need for synergy and cooperation in the context of their future activities.

14. On 26 November 2015, in Lusaka, the Special Rapporteur took part in a parallel session of the first African Girls' Summit on Ending Child Marriage, at which she delivered a statement on successful measures taken at the international level to address the issue of girl child forced marriage as a form of gender-based violence. She also recalled that one of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 5 is the elimination of all harmful practices, such as child and forced marriage, which should be seen as an opportunity to count on additional monitoring mechanisms to overcome a scourge that still affects girls in many parts of the world. She called for a clarification of the terminology used, and proposed the term "girl child forced marriage" whenever appropriate. She also called upon all States to collect data disaggregated by age of the children affected by the forced marriage.

15. On 30 and 31 January 2016, in Ottawa, the mandate holder, jointly with two members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context and the Chair of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, participated in a symposium on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, at which she explained that her mandate could contribute to the follow-up to global and regional recommendations, including the recommendation on the establishment of a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. A joint statement was issued following the symposium, in which participants welcomed the national enquiry set up by Canada.

16. On 4 February 2016, in London, at the invitation of the London School of Economics and Political Science, the Special Rapporteur participated in a full-day workshop, for civil society and practitioners tacking violence against women, focused on international and regional approaches, during which the mandate holder explained the role and priorities of the mandate. On 5 February 2016, at the invitation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, she took part in an expert group meeting on updating Committee general recommendation No. 19, and gave her inputs to the draft.

17. From 23 to 26 February 2016, in Guatemala City, the Special Rapporteur took part in a seminar on litigation of cases of violence against women and access to justice to women in Central America. At the event, she made introductory remarks to the seminar and two speeches addressing lawyers, prosecutors and non-governmental organizations litigating cases of violence against women, and judges and magistrates handing down judgements on these crimes. She also participated as an observer in a hearing of the emblematic trial of the Sepur Zarco, organized to mark the first trial where crimes committed against women, including sexual slavery during an armed conflict, were prosecuted in the country where the crimes were actually committed.

18. On 29 February 2016, in New York, the Special Rapporteur participated in a panel discussion on the role of the law, law schools and young lawyers in advancing Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and delivered a statement on how can the Goals, read together with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, could be an important tool in law and in practice.

19. On 7 March 2016, in Algiers, the mandate holder took part in the fifth General Assembly of the Kigali International Conference Declaration, which focused on the role of security organs in ending violence against women and girls. The mandate holder explained the international normative framework and shared best practices in preventing and ending violence against women. She also suggested that the framework of the Declaration was a

good practice that should be followed up at the global level by the formulation of a global code of conduct for law enforcement agents and security personnel dealing with violence against women.

20. On 8 March 2016, on the margins of the thirty-first session of the Human rights Council, the Special Rapporteur participated in a side event on the theme, "Violence against women and children in conflict situations and the role for the international community". On the same day, on the occasion of International Women's Day, the Special Rapporteur, together with the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, the Committee against Torture and the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture issued a joint statement to mark International Women's Day.[3]

21. On 9 March, the Special Rapporteur took part in a side event, on "Gender perspectives of torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment", in support of the work of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in gendering the torture prevention framework.

C. Other activities

22. The Special Rapporteur took the opportunity of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November 2015 to call upon all States to establish a "femicide watch" or "gender-related killing of women watch", and to focus on the prevention of killings of this type.[4]

23. During the period under review, the Special Rapporteur addressed, jointly with other mandate holders, a total of 31 communications in relation to issues falling within the mandate. The communications concerned, inter alia, issues relating to discrimination against women, human rights defenders, health, indigenous peoples, torture, summary executions and migrants. The mandate holder also joined several statements, such as on the fiftieth anniversary of the International Covenants on Human Rights and the protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights on the occasion of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

D. Country visits

24. The previous mandate holder visited the Sudan from 13 to 24 May 2015, at the invitation of the Government (see A/HRC/32/42/Add.1). The current mandate holder, who took up her function on 1 August 2015, visited South Africa from 4 to 11 December 2015 (A/HRC/32.42/Add.2) and Georgia from 15 to 19 February 2016 ((see A/HRC/32/42/Add.3) at the invitation of the Governments. The mandate holder thanks the Government of the Sudan for its cooperation with the previous mandate holder, and those of South Africa and Georgia for their cooperation before and during the visit.

[3] OHCHR, "Gender-based crimes through the lens of torture International Women's Day", 8 March 2016.

[4] OHCHR, "UN rights expert calls all States to establish a 'Femicide Watch'", 25 November 2015.

III. General context

A. Legal and policy framework: gaps in implementing international and regional standards relating to violence against women

25. The work of the current mandate holder will be based on existing international and regional human rights instruments, policy documents and standards to combat and prevent violence against women, with the aim of strengthening synergies among them and thereby helping to prevent and accelerate the elimination of violence against women.

26. The protection of women from violence is addressed in various human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

27. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol thereto are instruments dedicated specifically to women's rights that provide a gender perspective to all other human rights instruments. The Convention, which has been ratified or acceded to by 189 States, provides a broad definition of discrimination against women, both direct and indirect, including intentional or unintentional forms, before the law or in practice, in all aspects of public and private life, whether perpetrated by the State, its agents, private actors or individuals.

28. Under the Convention, States parties undertake "to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise". In its general recommendation No. 19, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women clarified the fact that violence against women impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms as a form of discrimination within the meaning of article 1 of the Convention, whether perpetrated by a State official or a private citizen, in public or in private life. Taking into consideration the significant developments witnessed in different global and regional recommendations and jurisprudence on violence against women since its adoption in 1992, the Committee has begun work on an update of its recommendation. As stated above, the Special Rapporteur was invited by the Committee to give her input into the draft on the updated version.

29. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified or acceded to by 106 States, envisages granting women access to justice at the international level. With regard to the communications procedure, the cases considered by the Committee have focused on important women's rights issues, including violence against women. One of the landmark decisions of the Committee in the area of domestic violence is *A.T. v Hungary*. Key findings by the Committee in its decision included that States may be held responsible for private acts if they fail to act with due diligence to prevent violations of rights or to investigate and punish acts of violence; that protection orders were not available; and that the State party had appeared to afford greater protection to the right to private property than to the petitioner's right to life and physical and mental integrity. Two other important cases addressing violence against women are the cases of *Şahide Goekce (deceased) v Austria* and *Fatma*

Yildirim (deceased) v Austria. The Committee, while recognizing the State party's comprehensive legislation and policies addressing domestic violence, concluded that the political will this manifested must be supported by State actors who adhere to the State party's obligations, including that of due diligence, for individual women victims of domestic violence to be able to enjoy the practical realization of the principle of equality between women and men and their human rights and fundamental freedoms. In both cases, the Committee concluded that the State party had violated its obligations under Convention.[5]

30. In 2003, the Committee, pursuant to article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, undertook an inquiry into the abduction, rape and murder of women in and around Ciudad Juarez, State of Chihuahua, Mexico, and recommended that the Government investigate thoroughly and punish the negligence and complicity of public authorities in, the disappearances and murders of women.[6] In 2012, the Committee conducted an inquiry with regard to the Philippines on the implementation of an order issued by the Mayor of the City of Manila on 29 February 2000, on the provision of sexual and reproductive health rights, services and commodities in the City of Manila. The Committee recommended that the State party ensure the immediate implementation of the Reproductive Health Act (adopted on 21 December 2012) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, including provisions that guaranteed universal access to the full range of reproductive health services and information for women (CEDAW/C/OP.8/PHL/1, para. 51 (b)). In 2013, the Committee conducted an inquiry on Canada, based on allegations of severe of violence, including disappearances and murder, suffered by aboriginal women and girls. The Committee recommended that the State ensure that all cases of missing and murdered women were duly investigated and prosecuted (CEDAW/C/OP.8/CAN/1, para. 217 (a)). These examples show how jurisprudence can be an important tool for transformative change.

31. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/104, provides international standards for the protection of women from violence, and describes measures that States and international agencies should take to ensure the elimination of all forms of violence against women, whether in the public or private sphere. In particular, it encourages States to develop appropriate guidelines to assist in the implementation of the principles set forth in the Declaration.

32. At the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Special Rapporteur called upon all Members States and other stakeholders to send her their views and proposals on any actions needed to improve the current framework addressing violence against women and girls, and also to consider the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and its call for the development of specific guidelines for its more effective implementation.

33. The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the fourth World Conference on Women, is a consensus policy document that sets out strategic priorities in 12 critical areas of concern, and elaborates measures, actions and implementation strategies necessary for

[5] Other cases considered by the Committee relating to violence against women include *A.T. v. Hungary* (case 2/2003), *Sahide Goekce (deceased) v. Austria* (case 5/2005), *Fatma Yildrim (deceased) v. Austria* (case 6/2005), *Karen T. Vertido v. the Philippines* (case 18/2008), *V.K v. Bulgaria* (case 20/2008), *V.P.P. v. Bulgaria* (case 31/2011), *Isatou Jallow v. Bulgaria* (case 32/2011), *R. P. B. v. the Philippines* (case 34/2011), *González Carreño v. Spain* (case 47/2012), *X. and Y. v. Georgia* (case 29/2009), *Belousssova v. Kazakhstan* (case 45/2012) and *O.V.J. v Denmark* (case 50/2013).

[6] CEDAW/C/2005/OP.8/MEXICO.

the advancement of women. It reflects the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination, and highlights violence against women as a critical area of concern, and identifies strategy objectives and a detailed catalogue of measures to be taken. The Commission on the Status of Women regularly reviews the progress made and remaining challenges of its implementation.[7]

B. Violence against women before conflict, in times of conflict and in post-conflict situations

34. The adoption of the landmark Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, and the resolutions thereon subsequently adopted by the Council,[8] reflected greater political will to improve women's role and participation in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In 2001, the mandate holder published a report focusing on, inter alia, violence against women perpetrated and/or condoned by the State during times of armed conflict (E/CN.4/2001/73).

35. In 2014, the previous mandate holder pointed out that sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations was regarded as something different and exceptional rather than a continuation of a pattern of discrimination and violence that exacerbated in times of conflict, and recalled that prevention of violence against women must start during times of peace and the women, peace and security agenda should be directly connected to the broader agenda of gender equality and the empowerment of women (see A/HRC/26/38). In its resolution 1888 (2009), the Security Council established the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The Special Rapporteur believes that developing cooperation between the two mandates on issues of common interest is important.

36. The global study on the implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) (see para. 4 above) refers to general recommendation No. 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in which the Committee called for the application of a women's rights framework, based on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which highlighted that the prevention of violence against women must start during times of peace. The women and peace and security agenda, as laid out in resolution 1325 (2000), should be connected directly to with the broader agenda of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

37. In times of peace, violence is committed in both the public and the private spheres, including in the family, the community, in State institutions and at the transnational level. Such violence is more common where patriarchal gender norms are entrenched, and where social and cultural norms contribute to the acceptance of violence against women and girls, or where there are formal or discriminatory provisions in domestic legislation relating to sex and gender, and no specific measures to address or prevent violence against women. The mandate holder also notes the severe underreporting of sexual violence, and consequently the lack of prosecution of perpetrators. Conflict and post-conflict situations often exacerbate existing forms of discrimination, or generate new forms of violence against women who are already in a vulnerable situation, such as rape by State or non-State actors, maiming, sexual mutilation, abduction, forced marriages to armed fighters

[7] E/CN.6/2015/3, paras.13 and 14.

[8] Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015).

(enslavement), torture and other forms of inhuman, cruel or degrading treatment of punishment. The prevention of such violence must be placed within the broader context of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, States are responsible for preventing acts of violence by State actors, and also to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women perpetrated by non-State actors.

C. Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals on the elimination of violence against women and girls

38. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development comprises 17 transformative Sustainable Development Goals aimed at the realization of the human rights of all, including the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Goal 5, and in particular its targets 5.2, focuses on the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, while target 5.3 focuses on the elimination of all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. While it is remarkable that, For the first time, the elimination of violence against women is included as a target for the achievement of sustainable goals, violence against women is also an issue addressed in Goal 11, on safe spaces, and Goal 16, relating to peace and security. It is also a barrier to achieving other gender-related goals, such as those on health, education, reducing poverty in all its forms, and sustainable growth. For the first time, a global gendered framework for development has been adopted that is inclusive and builds upon human rights instruments, all relevant world conferences, such as the four World Conferences on Women. The implementation of all 17 goals also requires systematic gender mainstreaming in all targets and indicators.

39. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a fresh opportunity to accelerate progress in achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, and in eliminating violence against women. Indeed, the formulation of Goal 5 on gender equality provides a women's perspective to the entire Agenda, which also provides that substantive gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls should be achieved by the elimination of all forms of discriminations and violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres. The Special Rapporteur stands ready not only to monitor progress but also to give guidance to States and other stakeholders in implementing Goal 5.

D. Regional human rights mechanisms

40. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa includes provisions on violence against women. Its implementation by States is assisted by the African Commission on Human Rights. The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará), which expressly recognizes the relationship between gender violence and discrimination, is a key instrument in addressing violence against women in the Inter-American system. The Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention is the mechanism responsible for follow-up on the implementation of the Convention. Within the Council of Europe system, the Istanbul Convention is the second regional treaty to address violence against women; and the monitoring mechanism in charge of the implementation of the Convention consists of two bodies, the Group of

Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and the Committee of the Parties (see A/HRC/29/27).

41. In 2010, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) established the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children. The two most important ASEAN documents on violence against women are the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (2004) and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Elimination of Violence Against Children in ASEAN (2013). In addition, in 2009, ASEAN established the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, which has been considering drafting several regional conventions, including on violence against women.

42. In 2011, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation established the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission, which has identified women's rights as a priority area of its work. A working group has been established to develop ways and means for the body to address women's rights, including through providing advisory opinions. It has been developing a mechanism to undertake studies and research on the situation of women's rights in the Member States of the Organization, and to provide technical cooperation and awareness-raising.

43. At the international level, despite the existence of international and regional norms and standards on violence against women, there is a general lack of a holistic and comprehensive approach to combat and prevent violence against women. There is a fragmentation of and disconnection between the implementation of global agendas and instruments, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent related resolutions, and regional instruments and agendas on violence against women and mechanisms in charge of monitoring their implementation, even though they all envisage links with other instruments and institutions. At the national level, implementation of these standards has generally been fragmented, and often without a coordinated or comprehensive system to combat and prevent violence against women on the basis of a solid legal and institutional framework.

44. The mandate holder considers that the universal and full acceptance and incorporation by States of both international and regional instruments are crucial for the establishment and improvement of existing national legal frameworks on the elimination of violence against women, including by the elimination of discriminatory family laws and penal laws, also with regard to harmful practices that hinder the enjoyment by women and girls of their rights.

IV. Thematic priorities

A. Establishment of a "femicide watch"

45. On 25 November 2015, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Special Rapporteur called upon all States to establish a "femicide watch", or a "gender-related killing of women watch". She proposed that data on the number of femicides or cases of gender-related killings of women, disaggregated by age and ethnicity of victims, and the sex of the perpetrators, and indicating the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim or victims, be published every year, on 25 November, and that information concerning the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators also be collected and published. Given the shortcomings of many national prevention systems, the lack of reliable data and risk assessments, and consequent misidentification,

concealment and underreporting of gender-related killings, including of women belonging to ethnic minorities, the proposal would provide crucial information for the development of effective strategies to address this serious human rights violation.

46. Each case of gender-related killing of women should be carefully analysed to identify any failure of protection, with a view to improving and developing further preventive measures. In the collection, analysis and publication of such data, States should cooperate with non-governmental organizations and independent human rights institutions working in the field, representatives of victims and other relevant international organizations and stakeholders.

47. In her report on gender-related killing of women and girls: promising practices, challenges and practical recommendations (A/HRC/20/16), the previous mandate holder noted different manifestations of gender-related killings of women, including as a result of intimate-partner violence, following accusations of sorcery or witchcraft, in the name of "honour", in the context of armed conflict, dowry-related killings of women, and killings of aboriginal and indigenous women, among others.

48. The Special Rapporteur recalls General Assembly resolution 70/176 on action against gender-related killing of women and girls, in which the Assembly encouraged Member States to collect, disaggregate, analyse and report data on gender-related killing of women and girls and to ensure that appropriate punishment for perpetrators of gender-related killings of women and girls are in place and are proportionate to the gravity of the offence.

49. The importance of statistics and data collection is broadly recognized in international human rights law, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which provides a legal basis and practical guidance for the promotion and development of statistics, disaggregated by sex.[9] In paragraph 24 (c) of its general recommendation No. 19, the Committee explicitly recognized the importance of statistical data to understand the situation of women, and recommended that States ensure that their national statistical services formulated their questionnaires in such a way that data could be disaggregated according to gender. It also recommended that States should encourage the compilation of statistics and research on the extent, causes and effects of violence, and on the effectiveness of measures to prevent and deal with violence. At the regional level, article 8 (h) of the Convention of Belém do Pará established the agreement by States to undertake progressively specific measures, including programmes, to ensure research and the gathering of statistics and other relevant information relating to the causes, consequences and frequency of violence against women. Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention established that States parties should undertake to collect disaggregated relevant statistical data on cases of all forms of violence.

50. While the collection of data is widely recognized under the international human rights framework, the establishment of a global "femicide watch" would bring a special emphasis to the analysis of these statistics and data as a catalyst for prevention and change. Given the shortcomings of certain national protection systems, the lack of proper risk assessment and the lack of quantitative and qualitative data, which are major barriers to effective prevention of gender-related killing of women, it would contribute to the prevention of preventable deaths of women. Where the situation in which femicides are committed is highlighted, it can stimulate more work across existing obligations, particularly with regard to addressing social attitudes that accept or normalize violence

[9] See OHCHR, *Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation*, 2012, p. 75.

against women and its most extreme forms resulting in killing. Bringing a name and a face to statistics also highlights the horrendous nature of the crime, the reality of patriarchal violence and the extreme pain and suffering inflicted on women and girls because of their gender.

B. Protection of and services for women survivors of violence

51. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women established global standards and the obligations of States to prevent violence against women and to provide services for survivors of violence. With regard to services, the Declaration calls upon States to work to ensure, to the maximum feasible extent, in the light of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation, that women subjected to violence and, where appropriate, their children have specialized assistance, such as rehabilitation, assistance in child care and maintenance, treatment, counselling and health and social services, facilities and programmes, and support structures, and should take all other appropriate measures to promote their safety and physical and psychological rehabilitation. In addition, the Declaration states that organs of the United Nations system should promote the formulation of guidelines or manuals relating to violence against women.

52. In its general recommendation No. 19, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that States parties should take all legal and other measures necessary to provide effective protection of women against gender-based violence.

53. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action establishes that women subjected to violence should have access "to just and effective remedies for the harm they have suffered", but they should also have access to "well-funded shelters and relief support", and "appropriate assistance to enable them to find a means of subsistence".

54. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women explained in the case of *A.T. v. Hungary* that a victim of domestic violence was unable to flee to a shelter, because none was equipped to accept her together with her children, in particular one of whom who was fully disabled. According to the Committee, the State should ensure that a safe home was given to the victim, in which she could live with her children, and that the victim should receive proportional reparation to the physical and mental harm endured.

55. The Istanbul Convention builds on existing international and regional instruments and international and national legal and policy advances. It contains a specific provision on shelters; article 23 in fact states that parties should "take the necessary legislative or other measures to provide for the setting-up of appropriate, easily accessible shelters in sufficient numbers to provide safe accommodation for and to reach out proactively to victims, especially women and their children." The Council of Europe has developed minimum standards for support services, in which, for example, one place in a women's shelter per 7,500 inhabitants should be provided, and the minimum standard should be one place per 10,000 inhabitants.[10] According to another standard, one shelter should be available for

[10] Liz Kelly, *Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services*, Council of Europe, 2008, p. 18.

every 10,000 inhabitants, providing safe emergency accommodation, qualified counselling and assistance in finding long-term accommodation.[11]

56. Shelters have an important role in removing one of the greatest barriers preventing women from leaving abusive situations and avoiding re-victimization and risks of new assaults. Various economic factors can contribute to women's vulnerability to violence and prevent them from seeking help.[12] Rehabilitation programmes for women survivors of violence should promote their physical, emotional and economic assistance, in particular by allowing them to secure immediate financial support, and promote opportunities to achieve and sustain income, to enable them to rebuild their lives.[13]

57. The mandate holder has visited a number of shelters and made recommendations on their availability in specific countries to ensure that women can have access to them (see E/CN.4/2006/61/Add.5 and A/HRC/4/34/Add.2 and Add.4). Women's shelters should offer specialized services for women, providing safe accommodation and support for women who have been subjected to violence and their children. In addition to these services, other prevention and protection measures should be available, including efficient and immediate protection and barring orders for survivors, witnesses and their families.[14] The Special Rapporteur intends to work on a compilation of good practices that could guide the establishment of shelters and support for women and children, and a compilation of good practices on protection orders.

C. Code of conduct for security and police forces dealing with violence against women

58. At the Special General Assembly of the Kigali International Conference Declaration, on the role of security organs in ending violence against women and girls (see para. 19 above), 12 Member States signed the Declaration following the high-level international conference on the same topic, which was held in Kigali in 2010. Since then, 43 States have taken part in activities to implement the Declaration, which includes a commitment "to recruit and promote more women officers at all echelons of the security organs".

59. In the view of the Special Rapporteur, the involvement of security organs, including those in peacekeeping operations, and the police in combating violence against women and

[11] "Good practices in legislation on violence against women", report of the expert group meeting, United Nations Office at Vienna, May 2008.

[12] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), "Economic development and opportunities" (available at www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1457-economic-development-and-opportunities.html).

[13] See Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention, *Guide to the Application of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women*, 2014, p. 55.

[14] See Women against Violence Europe Network and European info Centre against Violence (WAVE), "Description of a women's shelter" (available at www.wave-network.org/sites/default/files/shelterdescription.pdf).

[14] Some cases in which a restraining or protection orders were requested by the victim have been analysed by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, including *Sahide Goekce (deceased) v. Austria* (case 5/2005); *Fatma Yildrim (deceased) v. Austria* (case 6/2005); *V.K. v. Bulgaria* (case 20/2008); *Isatou Jallow v. Bulgaria* (case 32/2011) (in this case, the perpetrator was granted a protection order, on the basis that he was victim of violence, requiring the real victim to leave the family house); *Gonzalez Carreño v. Spain* (case 47/2012); and *A.T. v. Hungary* (case 2/2003) (at the moment of the facts there were no protection or restraining orders available under the domestic law).

girls is extremely important. Security organs are the first respondents in cases of violence, and have a key role to play in prevention, the prosecution of perpetrators and the protection of women survivors of violence. The goals attained and the challenges encountered in the implementation of the Kigali Declaration could be used as good practices for the formulation of a global code of conduct for police forces.

60. The mandate holder intends to explore the possibility of formulating a global code of conduct for security officers required to address cases of violence against women and girls, which could possibly be extended to other service providers, such as social workers and health providers.

D. Protecting women and girls in the context of forced displacement and refugee flows

61. Women and girls fleeing conflicts and persecution face various forms of gender-based violence and cases of multiple discrimination, particularly when they travel alone. These women and girls are vulnerable at all stages of their journey; in the countries of origin, of transit and of destination.

62. The challenges that women and girls migrants face include the risk of certain forms of violence, including sexual violence, by smugglers, criminal groups and individuals in countries of origin, transit and destination. Their journey could also turn into trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices. They may also face greater risks of sexual violence and harassment while in transit in camps or shelters owing to, among others, shared accommodation and common sanitation facilities, which make them vulnerable to violence and abuse. They may lack access to gender-specific services, while frequently the reluctance of victims to report cases of sexual violence results in underreporting. Besides being a key reason behind many women's decisions to migrate, gender-based violence is a common feature throughout their journeys and in countries of destination.

63. The Special Rapporteur notes that there is a lack of data on such human rights violations, a fact that prevents authorities from taking the necessary measures to ensure the safety of these women and girls. She intends to assist in the development of the necessary guidance for States in this field.

64. In its general recommendation No. 32, on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recognized that "displacement arising from armed conflict, gender-related persecutions and other serious human rights violations that affect women compounds existing challenges to the elimination of discrimination against women".

65. In 2016, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees established an advisory group on gender, forced displacement and protection, of which the Special Rapporteur is a member, which and explored, inter alia, good practices for fostering meaningful community engagement.

66. The large-scale phenomenon of female migration has yet to be adequately addressed in migration policies with the full recognition of the gender-specific challenges and risks that migrating and refugee women and girls face. The Special Rapporteur stands ready to assist in the development of necessary guidance for States in this field.

E. Fundamentalism, extremism and violence against women

67. On 15 January 2016, the Secretary-General presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism to the General Assembly.[15] Discussions have since been held on exploring the intersection of conflict, violence and gender and the need for governmental, regional and multilateral organizations to include a gender perspective in all levels of policy- and decision-making, particularly in efforts to address the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. Against this backdrop, the Special Rapporteur proposes to examine the connections between fundamentalism or extremism and gender-based violence against women and its root causes.

F. Capacity-building for legal professionals and law enforcement officials on violence against women

68. The Special Rapporteur notes the importance of capacity-building for legal professionals and law enforcement officials, including members of the police, the prosecution and the judiciary, and social workers, on regional and international human rights instruments and institutions, in particular with regard to women's human rights and violence against women. Capacity-building should include the jurisprudence on violence against women developed at the global and regional levels, and good practices to ensure that, at the national level, laws are applied in accordance with international norms and standards.

69. The Special Rapporteur encourages the inclusion of equality between women and men and violence against women as subjects of study in university curricula on law and related fields, and in training of legal professionals, such as judges and law enforcement officials. Training should include the international women's human rights framework and practical studies of the rich jurisprudence and case law on violence against women and the obligation of States to take appropriate measures to modify or abolish customs and practices that constitute discrimination against women and that affects women's right to a fair and just trial (see CEDAW/C/57/D/34/2011, para. 8.8).

G. Online violence against women: a new challenge

70. While the use of information and communications technology has contributed to the empowerment of women and girls, its use has also generated online violence. In the view of the Special Rapporteur, there is a need to examine this recent phenomenon, and the applicability of national laws to it, and to make recommendations for States and non-State actors to fight online violence against women and girls while respecting freedom of expression and the prohibition of incitement to violence and hatred, in accordance with article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

H. Focus on prevention and elimination of discriminatory laws and their negative impact in perpetuating or contributing to violence against women

71. The Special Rapporteur regards the prevention of violence against women as an aspect of the mandate that focuses on the elimination of the root causes of violence against women, and its consequences. To that end, she has identified the main components that

[15] See General Assembly resolution 70/254.

should be further elaborated, including States' obligations to take positive measures to change harmful stereotypes relating to gender roles conducive to violence and, at the same time, to undertake activities to empower women and reduce their vulnerability to violence; the meaningful inclusion of men and boys to contribute actively to the prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls; and awareness-raising campaigns to fight violence against women on a regular basis and at all levels, in cooperation with national human rights institutions, civil society and non-governmental organizations.

72. Discriminatory laws, in particular discriminatory provisions in constitutions, family laws, nationality laws and penal codes, perpetuate the lower status of women and their oppression in society, thereby fuelling violence against women and girls, given that there is little to deter perpetrators from committing these crimes, or because recourse for victims is inadequate. It is against this backdrop that the prevalent and multiple grave forms of violence by fundamentalist and extremist actors committed in recent times are built. The Special Rapporteur intends to explore the link between these discriminatory laws and violence against women and girls, and to make recommendations for law reforms, in particular with regard to family and penal laws, and other national laws and practices that regulate family relationships and the private sphere, with a view to curtailing violence against women and girls.

V. Working methods

73. Building upon the work of previous mandate holders, and in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/45, which established the mandate, and Human Rights Council resolution 23/25, the most recent resolution renewing the mandate, the Special Rapporteur will continue to seek and receive information on violence against women, its causes and consequences from States, treaty bodies, specialized agencies, other special rapporteurs responsible for various human rights questions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, and to respond effectively to such information; recommend measures, ways and means at the local, national, regional and international levels to eliminate all forms of violence against women and its causes, and to remedy its consequences; follow up on implementation of recommendations, work closely with all special procedures and other human rights mechanisms of the Council and with the treaty bodies, taking into account the request of the Council that they regularly and systematically integrate the human rights of women and a gender perspective into their work; cooperate closely with the Commission on the Status of Women in the discharge of its functions; and adopt a comprehensive and universal approach to the elimination of violence against women, its causes and consequences, including causes of violence against women relating to the civil, cultural, economic, political and social spheres.

A. Cooperation with other special procedures addressing violence against women

74. The Special Rapporteur intends to work in collaboration with other special procedure mechanisms that examine issues relating to violence against women, including the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism, the Independent Expert on minority issues, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons and the Special Rapporteur

on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and will strive to identify possible joint initiatives that can complement the work of each mandate, including joint visits, joint follow-up to recommendations, joint communications on allegations of women's rights violations and the issuance of press statements.

B. Cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other treaty bodies

75. The Special Rapporteur recalls that the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1994/45 establishing the mandate, called upon the Special Rapporteur to carry out the mandate within the framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all other international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. In 2008, the Human Rights Council, in its resolution 7/24, added the Beijing Platform for Action to the framework, and called upon the Special Rapporteur to work closely with other special rapporteurs, special representatives and working groups. It also called upon the mandate holder to hold consultations with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and all other treaty bodies. The mandate holder intends to strengthen the engagement between her mandate and the Committee, and to hold regular consultations with it, so as to establish an institutionalized cooperation between these two mechanisms. As mentioned above, she has already begun to cooperate with the Committee in the updating of general recommendation No. 19.

C. Cooperation within the United Nations system

76. The mandate holder recalls that it is also essential to maintain close cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization, UNFPA, UNESCO, the International Labour Organizations and, in particular, UN-Women, in order to strengthen coordination and coherence in the responses of the United Nations system, including at the country level, for the implementation of the different international and regional standards on eliminating violence against women. She would like to also continue work on the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 23/25, which focuses on preventing and responding to rape and other forms of sexual violence in compliance with international human rights obligations. In this regard, she considers extremely important to develop strong cooperation with the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice of UNODC, which could be important to accelerate the implementation of the goals of the mandate at the level of national criminal justice systems. In addition, to be able to follow-up appropriately on her call for States to establish a "femicide watch" or "gender-related killing of women watch", the mandate holder intends to hold regular consultations with UNODC.

77. With regard to violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations, and as already mentioned above, she also intends to strengthen cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

D. Cooperation with regional and national mechanisms dealing with violence against women

78. The Special Rapporteur encourages regional human rights systems to provide her with input, and seeks their views on implementation, since these systems have an important role in strengthening universal human rights standards. She is conscious of the importance of continuing to collect inputs from Member States and all stakeholders, including global, regional and national mechanisms and non-governmental organizations, to enable them to take fully informed decisions on the measures needed to accelerate the eradication of violence against women as a priority.

VI. Conclusion and recommendations

79. **The Special Rapporteur recognizes that the mandate has become a visible, respected and credible mechanism to guide States, civil society actors, other stakeholders and the international community on the elimination of violence against women, its causes and consequences. Since the establishment of the mandate in 1994, the landscape surrounding it has changed, with the development of international and regional frameworks and mechanisms on violence against women that direct the mandate, to reshape its role and to focus on prevention, implementation challenges and stronger collaboration with all other relevant global and regional mechanisms, in order to accelerate the elimination of violence against women, its causes and consequences.**

80. **In the view of the Special Rapporteur, there is a general lack of a holistic, comprehensive approach to combating and preventing gender-based violence and the fragmentation of various policies and legislation addressing violence against women and women's rights. One of the Special Rapporteur's key priorities will be to contribute to closing the gap in implementing existing international and regional instruments on violence against women, and to protect victims by providing them with adequate support services and effective remedies, and by prosecuting perpetrators. The mandate holder is convinced that the mandate has an important role to play in promoting synergies among existing international and regional instruments and systems on violence against women, with the purpose of accelerating and achieving their full implementation. She considers it important to improve synergies among the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with the Optional Protocol thereto, the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and to follow up on resolutions and/or regional instruments on violence against women, to achieve their full implementation and to accelerate the elimination of violence against women.**

81. **Notwithstanding the need to develop synergies between the international and regional human rights systems further, the Special Rapporteur considers it important to continue the discussion on the adequacy of international, regional and national legal frameworks to prevent and combat violence against women. In that respect, it is also important to consider new developments, such as the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in updating its general recommendation No. 19, in which the Special Rapporteur participated, which will incorporate the latest developments at the national, regional and international levels, and build upon the growing jurisprudence and work of the Committee, and the work of the Special Rapporteur. The update could indeed provide useful and very much needed additional guidance on steps that should be taken to address gender-based**

violence whenever it occurs and to speed up its elimination. The mandate holder calls for an inclusive participatory process in updating general recommendation No. 19. Complementary to that work, the Special Rapporteur also calls for renewed attention to the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and in particular the need for States to consider the possibility of developing guidelines to assist in the implementation of the principles set forth in it.